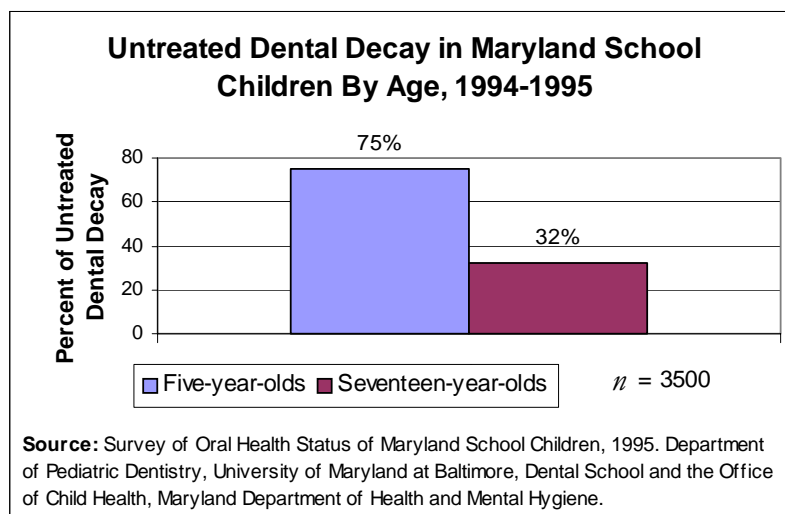
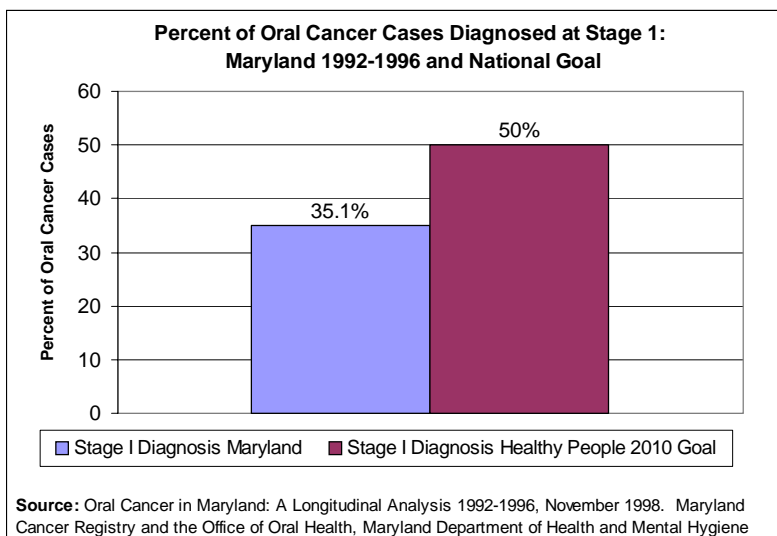


ORAL HEALTH

The Issue

Good oral health involves more than healthy teeth. Lack of oral health has major consequences for children and adults. Available evidence indicates that the impact of oral disease, one of the most preventable health problems, is greatly felt, especially among Maryland's children.

Oral health means much more than healthy teeth. It means being free of chronic conditions, oral and pharyngeal cancers, tooth decay, periodontal disease, broken teeth or jaws, as well as the absence of developmental and congenital conditions such as cleft lip and palate. Oral health is integral to general health. Lack of proper oral health has major consequences for children and adults. Oral health problems developed in childhood can lead to lifelong oral and even systemic complications. Maryland ranks seventh among the states in oral cancer mortality.



Oral disease has been recognized as one of the most preventable diseases, but also, one of the most prevalent diseases among young people. In the United States, 25% of children and adolescents experience 80% of all dental decay. Children whose families have low incomes, are in minority groups, have minimal exposure to fluoride, have special health needs or come from less educated or poorer families are at greatest risk for oral disease. In 1995, fewer than one in five children in the United States who were eligible for dental services under the Medicaid Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment Program received a preventive screening.

The oral health status of children in Maryland mirrors that of the nation. In 1993, only 14.2% of Medicaid-eligible children in Maryland received Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment. The Survey of the Oral Health Status of Maryland School Children, 1994-1995, found three times the U.S. average in untreated tooth decay in Maryland children. Seventy-five percent

Topics, by jurisdiction, included in the Health Improvement Plan

Statewide - *Improving Access to Health Data and Ensuring an Adequate Public Health Workforce*

Harford County - *Public Health Infrastructure*

Prince George's County - *Enhancing Infrastructure for Health Planning*

Priority focus in other jurisdictions

Public health infrastructure is included as a priority area for FY2000 in:

Frederick County • Harford County • Worcester County

Highlights of HIP strategies recommended to improve the public health infrastructure

(for in-depth details, see the complete text of each state and county module)

- Establish the capacity to monitor and plan for statewide need for public health workers. **(State)**
- Expand the existence and use of distance learning technologies at State and local health departments. **(State)**
- Develop a Report Card of the county's progress to date toward reaching its health care goals. **(Harford County)**
- Complete a formal county-wide needs assessment and establish an on-going needs assessment process through which local health needs and priorities are identified and reflected in the local health improvement plan. **(Prince George's County)**

Statewide Partners

Information Resources Management Administration, DHMH • Maryland Association of County Health Officers • Maryland Department of Budget Management, Personnel Division • Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) • Maryland Local Health Departments • Maryland Public Health Association • Office of Health Policy, DHMH • Office of Public Health Assessment, DHMH